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REPORTS SERVICE

BIRTHDAY FOR SOMALIA

Continuing Problems but Progress Also Mark an Adventurous First Year of Independence

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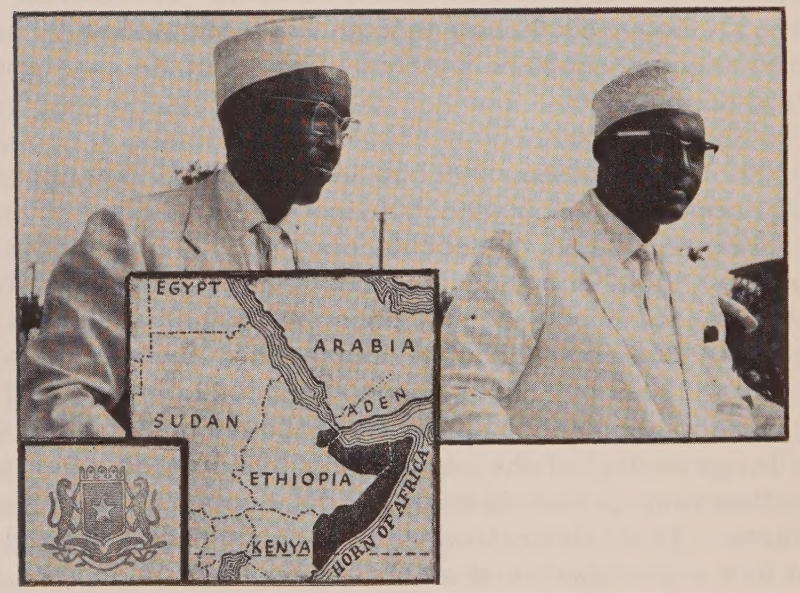

The frequent light showers that mark the rainy season along the coastal strip of southern Somalia hardly dampened the exuberance of the capital city last July first. It was the anniversary --the first--of independence and the country's first step toward the union of all the territories Somalis claim on the Horn of Africa. The task of Somali unification was unfinished: a fragment of British

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Kenya wanted by Somalia remained outside the new republic; the entrepôt of Djibouti, partly populated by Somalis, was under the French; and there remained for Somalia the large and irritating problem of the Ogaden, the lowland triangle of Ethiopia where Somali tribesmen had grazed their camels and cattle from the beginning of Somali settlement on the Horn. The problem of the unfinished nation was the theme of the birthday celebration, and the politicians of the new state vied with one another in their enthusiasm for action.

But there was much else to celebrate also. Mogadiscio was adorned with triumphal arches, flags, and banners; its gatherings were treated to congratulatory rhetoric; and its walls were liberally stenciled in the national light blue with slogans and exhortations in English, Italian, and Arabic. Somalia is in the process of deciding on a script for its presently unwritten language[1] and in the interim the foreign print ("Viva Somalia! Strong and Independent!; "Somalia e libera!; يعيش الجمهورية الصومالية) lends an international tone--like the signs in a European sleeping car.

There were more turgid messages also. On the wall beside my hotel, which faced the parliament building, was the statement: "The Somali People Believe in Bandung Principles!" It was repeated underneath in Arabic, and although it was similar to the other stenciled signs, its sophistication suggested that either Egyptian or more sinister "Neutralist" propagandists had been at work. Since illiteracy in Somalia approaches 90%, it could be assumed that the message would have limited effect, but its existence presented an interesting line of inquiry.

The celebration had been formally inaugurated with an official parade of the police and military force, including a modest but enthusiastically received flypast of the republic's two DC-3 transports and a few light trainer planes. The informal festivities continued sporadically for two more days--it was clearly a people's party. Delegations from the surrounding towns of the region, and from city neighborhoods, marched through the streets from time to time, pausing on whim, it seemed, to dance to drums and handclapping. There were floats representing some of the larger centers of the interior, and a large model of the parliament building on wheels demonstrating the participation (and preoccupation) of the Somalia Youth League, the dominant political party. The celebration was magnificently colorful and infectiously happy, and it had a good-natured orderliness about it despite the masses of perhaps 30,000 Somalis who gathered in the large piazza in front of the parliament building where officials reviewed the celebration.[2]

Somalia did not forget its international manners in the midst of this do-

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[1] About 1925, a Somali devised a script known as Osmanli in order to record poetry of the nomadic people, but it never was generally accepted. The debate rests with the choice of either Latin or Arabic script, both of which are regarded as "foreign," although to the Muslim Somalis, Arabic has its religious attraction.

mestic excitement, and the now considerably enlarged diplomatic corps rolled by in their competitive Chrysler Imperials, Cadillacs, and Zims on the way to receptions and dinners given by the President of the Republic and others during the two-day festival.

A good time obviously was had by all, but behind the cheerful façade, the 121 politicians who people the parliament, now that both ex-Italian and ex-British Somali territory are one, were extremely busy. The issues involved were hardly ideological, but the politicking revealed one of the first critical problems of unification and independence. Would those, chiefly of the Darud and Hawiye tribes, who had ruled the councils of the Somalia Youth League since its inception more than 18 years ago, and who through their association with the Italian administration during the last ten years of trusteeship had continued to rule, maintain their control? Would the cost of this continued leadership be too great for the minor tribes or more particularly for the outnumbered leaders who had come out of the former British territory? The total elite, whether of British or Italian tutelage, was small; perhaps not more than 300 people who could claim the characterization of being totally modern. The division of power and perquisites among them, however, was a critical issue of which a specific aspect was who would hold the mandate of leadership for the next five years.

During the first year of independence, Somalia had constructed a new constitution. First drafted by an amiable professor of law at the University of Rome[3] and then worked over by Somalis and United Nations technicians, the document had been presented to the Somali electorate last June 20 in a referendum. While the Soviet Ambassador referred to it as "just another bourgeois constitution," it is deserving of more honor as a basically European conception providing for basic civil liberties not at wide variance with what appear to be Somali traditions. However, in adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations as part of the document, the drafters noted the declaration should apply "insofar as possible." Somalia is a "representative, democratic, and unitary republic" for which the main source "of the laws of the state" shall be found in Islamic doctrine. Considerable power is vested in the president of the state, who is elected for a six-year term of office by the parliament. He is commander in chief of the armed forces and authorizes "the presentation to the national assembly of bills originated by the government." Under the parliamentary system, the government is headed by a prime minister and council subject to the confidence of the unicameral legislature. As constitutions go, Somalia's has the virtue of simplicity. Its democratic

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[2] The photograph on page one shows Aden Abdulla Osman (left), the President of the Somalia Republic and Abdur Rashid Ali, the Prime Minister, watching the Independence Day parade pass in review in Mogadiscio. At the corner is the seal of the republic.

[3] Professor Giuseppe A. Costanzo, who has also been instrumental in organizing Somalia's university center for public administration.

Scenes from Somalia's Independence Day festivities on the first of July.

principles rest in theory upon a European tradition but in reality upon tribal practice, which in Somalia's case may be more difference in form than in substance. In any case, it was not so simple that the main body of the electorate could be expected either to read or to understand the document.

The constitutional referendum produced an unprecedented vote of approval. More than 90% of the total poll of 1,952,662 votes approved, a total so high that Mogadiscio's amateur statisticians estimated the country's total population to be closer to five million than to the previously accepted figure of two million. Moreover, the lack of disorder at the polling places, which had not been the case in previous votes, suggested that the figure was freer of fakery than before. According to the national commandant of police, it was "an unquestionable vote of confidence." What, exactly, it expressed confidence in was not so clear: in the leadership group, in the Constitution, or in a euphoric endorsement of independence.

Of the vote, the police commandant remarked:

"Even if as much as 20% of the vote was padded locally, and I do not believe this to be true, an overwhelming majority of the people was in favor--not only of the Constitution, but of the leadership that had brought us to independence. Actually, secret orders were sent out by the Prime Minister to prevent corruption, and those who did falsify figures can be counted as a relatively few enthusiasts who missed the point."

The Constitution approved, it was time to convert the provisional government into its now legal form, the most urgent aspect of which was the election of the president of the republic. The politicking was intense and personal and, despite attempts to make lasting combinations under the shadow of patronage, no one was certain until the election took place on July 6 whether the opposition minorities candidate, Sheikh Ali Jamali,[4] a member of the Hawiye tribal grouping, would win the assembly's approval.

The deputies had begun arriving early at the parliament building, and so had the crowd. The piazza was surrounded by smartly dressed and disciplined police in sufficient strength to insure order and provide the important session with suitable dignity. Inside the theaterlike assembly hall, the voting would follow the form provided for in the Constitution: the first and second ballots would require a two-thirds majority for victory, but the third ballot would need only a simple majority. Periodic cheers outside the building attested to the popularity of the incumbent provisional president, Aden Abdulla Osman, a Hawiye tribesman, but an early member of the Youth League and the candidate of what might be called the Somali "Establishment."

On the first ballot the votes were evenly divided: 60-60. The speaker had withheld his vote. On the second the opposition gained a vote: 61-59, but still lacked the necessary two-thirds. On the third there also were ballot switches; Aden Abdulla Osman won, but barely, 62-59; and the applause outside indicated that the public was satisfied. If not as momentous, the balloting was almost as close as that of the United States a year ago, and certainly no less a word of democratic caution to the winners in Somalia. It was a reminder that the "ins" might not always hold control, that the dominance of the Darud, the largest of the nation's five lineage groups, within the SYL should not be taken for granted; and that the public had noted that most of the elite had been drawn from the ex-Italian protectorate.[5] The tribal rivalry and north-south jockeying

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[4] The term "sheikh" has a religious meaning in Somalia, and does not indicate the same political or hereditary leadership as in Arab countries. For a short review of Somalia's political and historical emergence see Somalia on the Horn, a series of seven Reports published by the AUFS in June 1960 (EAB-2-'60, EAB-3-'60, EAB-4-'60, EAB-5-'60, EAB-6-'60, EAB-7-'60, EAB-8-'60).

[5] The present amalgamated parliament, combining the assembly of the ex-Italian Somalia and the legislative council of ex-British Somaliland, whose most important action had been to vote union with Somalia, is composed of 121 men, elected for five-year terms. The majority of the body, representing the larger constituency, is from ex-Italian Somalia, a total of 90. The tribal breakdown is also important since complete intertribal integration remains an objective of the future development of the country, and reflects the estimated size of the various lineage groups. The introduction of democratic forms and a unitary state increases the power of the tribal majorities, of course, and gives the Darud added power, for example: Darud, 44 members; Hawiye, 35; Rahanwinn, 22; others, 20. See Somalia on the Horn, Part III: Politics (EAB-4-'60), op. cit., footnote four.

for power emerged as two important aspects of the contest. The first was traditional and the second a cross-tribal and hence modern political manifestation. Resolution of either or both of these conflicts would be a significant indicator of political maturity. Either could be the canker that might in time destroy the country's hope for liberal democracy. Meanwhile, political prestige already was being measured by the ferocity with which "ins" and "outs" clamored for Greater Somalia, and particularly for the accession of the Ethiopian Ogaden. It was the specific of nationalistic rhetoric, as it had been for nearly two decades of Somali nationalism.

In any event constitutional government was formally inaugurated in Somalia, the birthday party was over, official business could proceed once more.

Official business, however, included a staggering agenda of both new and old political problems and economic difficulties--many of them urgent.

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Whether one accepts the Somali's somewhat chauvinistic estimate of a population close to five million, or the previously estimated two million, the economic composition of the society and a few details reveal its state of development and the elemental nature of internal problems. Statistics in Somalia are meager, a census system being obviously a priority among a myriad of other priorities, but the following occupation estimates are reasonably "informed figures" with which Somali officials do not disagree.

Nomadic agriculture	68%
Government	5%
Commerce	4%
Fishing	1%
Handicrafts	1%
Other and unknown	21%

[Note: It is also estimated that not more than 13% of the population are within the money economy; and that the per-capita income can be equated at about $50 a year. Illiteracy is estimated at about 90%.]

Bananas, bought almost totally by Italy, constitute more than 61% of the value of Somalia's exports; meat products (from the country's estimated 6.7 million animals) provide another 16%; and wild animal skins and charcoal (!) are valued at about 10% each. This primary business amounts to about $25 million a year for ex-Italian Somalia and another $10.3 million for ex-British Somaliland. In general, Somalia's trade accounts balance, but no matter how conservatively satisfactory this fact may be, it does not take into account the obvious need, in both political and economic frames of reference, for developmental investment and, during these costly early years, for direct budgetary assistance to the government. It could be argued that as the costs of trusteeship or colonial government were borne outside the economy, the transition to independence does not suddenly create a new source of local income on which a modernizing government can prosper. The state's budgetary deficit is estimated at more than $9 million, made up of both military and civilian components of which more than 50% is represented by payrolls.[6]

Somalia's armed forces on Independence Day parade.

In terms of net worth, Somalia is singularly unfavored. Its gross income from exports is, for example, about half as great as the annual net income of the Sinclair Oil Company, an American firm that is hopefully searching for petroleum in several areas of the country. Its total income from all sources is less than that of a small city in Kansas or Maryland. However, it has begun a program of development, building on the modest efforts undertaken during the Italian and British administrations, efforts which seemed now only to demonstrate, as one observer of Somalia has noted, that "political power alone cannot be counted upon to solve economic problems."[7] In short, Somalia has entered hopefully upon modern independence under severe economic handicaps, where economic viability or any improved standard of living for its people must be regarded as being very long in the future, and, short of a petroleum miracle, can be arrived at only by an arduous evolutionary process.

In these early days of economic evolution, Somalia has not found itself friendless. The roster of countries willing for political reasons to assist the new country has been growing, and credit has been offered by the following:

Egypt (commodity and military assistance)	$11.2 million
Russia (project loans for communications, medical equipment and commodities so far undetermined)	47.0 million

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[6] This high proportion of salaries and wages in budgets of underdeveloped countries is hardly unusual until economic progress has been begun. Iran's budget in 1950, for example, allocated more than 85% to such payments.

[7] Karp, Mark. The Economics of Trusteeship in Somalia (Boston, 1960).

Czechoslovakia (commodity assistance and machinery)	$ 4.2 million
West Germany (fish cannery and textile factory projects)	1.2 million
European Economic Community development fund (hospital project, possibly highways)	2.0 million

Representatives from Great Britain, Italy, and the United States met in Rome last November in an attempt to share out their respective responsibilities in aiding Somalia. Britain undertook to maintain a level of developmental and budgetary assistance amounting to $4.5 million, Italy (although reluctantly and only after considerable pressure from the United States) planned to grant about $5.7 million for technical assistance and other forms of aid. The United States is currently helping Somalia to the extent of $4.4 million a year, but it has undertaken the engineering costs and (by loan) the ultimate construction costs of a new port facility at Chisimaio, south of Mogadiscio. This will serve the most fertile agricultural region of Somalia, assisting in the export of bananas particularly, and will ultimately cost more than $8 million. Superficially, at least, it would appear that Somalia's independence had been somewhat generously recognized.

However, from the Somali point of view, the aid proffered has not always met with approval. The costs of government are high, and rarely reckoned in the rush for independence in which both Somalia and its trustees participated, and which the United States approved. The economy provides little basis for substantial increases in tax revenue to pay the costs of independence. At the insistence of the provisional government, the Italian administration authorized the creation of a national army of about 5,000 men even before independence. The priorities set by a new government sensing keenly its requirements to remain in power do not always agree with the loftier concepts of assisting nations. Logically a budget for Somalia might give higher priority to educational and public health items than to a call on funds for support of a relatively costly military establishment. But Somalia officialdom applies different criteria. Not only is a national army a symbol of statehood and, in Somalia's need to merge its intertribal structure, a realistic expression of national unity, but also the country feels a threat from neighboring Ethiopia, with which it has an unresolved and increasingly bitter border dispute.

At the root of the dispute is Somalia's determination to annex that portion of Ethiopia known as the Ogaden, where chiefly Somalis live and graze their animals. Thus would be achieved the long-sought ideal of Greater Somalia. The far-reaching <u>présence</u> of the United States is involved here, and from the Somali point of view, the American policy is ambivalent.

The United States aids Ethiopia with about $10 million worth of military hardware annually as well as with an economic aid program that has amounted to more than $45 million since 1952. The military program is a somewhat obvi-

ous rental payment for an important communications base in Eritrea, although subsidiary consideration in granting it has undoubtedly been given to the desirability of providing Ethiopia with a modern unifying force in its not entirely integrated empire, and of aiding its defense against a potentially adventurous Egypt. However, to avoid conducting a miniature arms race with itself on the Horn of Africa, and in the general interests of a peaceful image, the United States has consistently avoided the subject of arms to Somalia, preferring to pass this problem to the former trustees, Italy and Britain. Although the United States has not supplied arms to Somalia neither has it taken exception to Somalia's creation of a costly national army and it has given substantial assistance to the long-established national police force.[8] But what looms large with the Somalis is the American policy of military assistance to Ethiopia, the only country Somalia regards as a possible future enemy.

Italy and Great Britain have not been eager to assume roles as military suppliers, but since the alternatives may be politically less desirable in the larger frame of world politics, the position may be thrust upon them. Czechoslovakia has already volunteered to supply arms under its credit, as the USSR has also. Egypt has already supplied independent Somalia's first military aid, a matter of 5,000 rifles, some military trucks and World War II tracked weapons carriers. This, with the materiel already possessed by the national police, has provided the basic equipment of the country's armed forces.

Not only because the United States is heavily involved in Ethiopia does it loom large in Somalia. Its technical aid mission of 58 officers has grown each year, and the American community in Mogadiscio is rapidly becoming the largest single foreign group, if the ex-colonial Italians are excepted. Generally, the projects in which aid and technical assistance have been involved have not been flashy; they do not show the quick results which a new government, uncertain in its domestic politics, believes to be urgent. Somalis in government were quick to criticize the American program in private. Their critical comments may be judged against a background of inexperience but also against the Government's need to maintain the dynamic of progress that independence implies. Specifically, the United States well-drilling program was cited as one that had fallen short of expectations. Superficially, at least, this would indicate that despite years of experience in technical assistance, the aid mission had missed the point of impact.

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[8] During the last two years, as part of an economic aid program, the United States has supplied communications equipment to the police, while Italy, as the administering power until 1960, supplied such arms and equipment as the police and border force required. The relative strengths of the two forces is as follows: Police, 2,500 regular officers and men, 1,000 being incorporated into the force from the ex-British territorial police, and 200 recruits presently in training; Army, 1,000 Somali Scouts (the border police) taken over from the national police, 1,200 mobile police (also formerly a part of the national police), and some 2,000 recruits in training. The total armed force of Somalia is in excess of 8,000 men.

Well drilling in a country as parched for water as is Somalia, where cattle raising provides a livelihood for its nomadic population, could hardly have a higher political or economic priority.[9] The United States has been involved in training projects for the development of underground water resources since 1952, yet not many wells have been completed and of these few are operative. The difficulty appears to be the lack of skilled Somalis to maintain the pumps, and the lack of a government service adequate to cope with the problem. It would seem that until now, at least, the Americans have failed to recognize adequately that water development involves both the well and the institutional framework necessary to provide maintenance. There is no escape from the problem, but it is only fair to point out that, until Somalia became independent a year ago, aid projects had to be filtered through the Italian authorities whose concepts of institutional development left much to be desired.

American aid policy in Somalia is only a part of the total American approach to the problems of the Horn of Africa. The emergence of Somalia as an independent state has made necessary a re-examination of United States policy, but the Horn includes not only Somalia but also Ethiopia. And the complex of relationships must also take into account the Ethiopian internal situation that is an aftermath of the attempted coup d'etat of December 1960, when the palace guard, under leadership of an Ethiopian graduate of Teachers College of Columbia University, revolted, only to be crushed by the regular army in the name of Haile Selassie. The rebellion left not only 1,500 dead, including a massacred majority of the Emperor's cabinet, but also an unfinished revolution that awaits new leadership to speed a long delayed social and economic development in a backward country. There is clearly an urgency to maintain a flexibility toward this subregion of Africa, and to work for a peaceable solution of its political problems.

At the moment there appears to be substance in the remark of an experienced British diplomat in Somalia who said to me:

"I believe that neither the State Department nor the British Foreign Office have faced up to the problem of the Horn. It could be a very ugly problem indeed."

The leadership of Somalia would not disagree.

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Aden Abdulla Osman, the President of the Republic of Somalia, is a kindly, quiet man. He has a disarming quality of humility and relaxed cordiality that provides sharp clarity to his direct questions and answers which leave no doubt about his political acumen. Sixtyish, largely self-educated as most Somali leaders are, he spent much of his early adult life as a hospital orderly.

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[9] Somalia has a mean rainfall of less than 11 inches per year, unevenly distributed throughout an area comparable to that of California.

When the Somali Youth League was organized, he was a leader although he sometimes was neglected by the Italian administration which had its own political favorites. More recently he has been challenged in his leadership, while still enjoying a tremendous personal following among the people of his country. He has opened the Villa Somalia, once the seat of the Italian governor and now the President's residence, to the public and is also using it as an office, with the result that the colonial opulence of Italy seems suddenly to have a refreshingly democratic injection. The President has chosen to live in a small cottage nearby (with his wife and eight children), rather than adopt the pomp of the Italian administrators. In all, he has set a popular if somewhat ascetic image.

The slogan I had seen in Mogadiscio aligning Somalia with the principles of Bandung had intrigued me, and when we began to talk I asked what this meant.

The President chuckled. "I am not certain what the Bandung principles are," he said, "but if it means that we are not a member of any bloc of nations --even an African bloc--maybe we do believe in them. We are in favor of the independence of all nations, and we wish to be friendly with all. We are a Muslim people, of course, and for this reason cannot be for materialism or for the principles of communism, but we are in favor of the United Nations and we endorse the United Nations Charter."

The President was to journey to Yugoslavia within two months to attend the meeting of neutrals in affirmation of his country's policy. A fellow delegate would be the Emperor of Ethiopia, with whom Somalia was conducting an intense and often bitter interchange through the media of press and radio. Both of these would be among the minority of neutralist leaders to endorse the principle of self-determination in regard to the Berlin problem.

"Do you think anything can be done about the border problem?" I asked. "The situation in Addis Ababa is not altogether clear. The Emperor's position does not seem to be as secure as it was, and if your campaign continues it might have grave results there."

The President's eyes twinkled. "We can't allow our interests to be governed by Ethiopian difficulties," he said.

"But must you continue these propaganda attacks?"

"We have an active political opposition here, you know, and we must protect Somali interests. Even so, we have told our people in the Ogaden to be quiet," he replied, "but there are refugees here now and the incidents of re-

pression continue. Only if there were some hope that the problem could be resolved could we slow down our representations."

"What measures do you think would be feasible?" I asked. In actuality, the "repressions" of Somalis who live in the Ogaden which are now cited have likely been matters of sporadic occurrence in the area for generations--or at least since Ethiopia assumed legal control in 1907 of the lowland territory. Warring over waterholes, and stealing of camels and cattle probably have been endemic in the region since man settled there.[10] What is new, of course, is the Government of Somalia, a sovereign power to whom the Somali people anywhere may look for protection, and do.

"We wish some country friendly to both of us would mediate the problem--perhaps the United States. We are asking only for a referendum; an opportunity for these Somalis to declare whether they want to be Somali citizens or Ethiopian subjects."

"Are you interested in people only, or in people and land?"

"People mean land in Africa," he said firmly. "After all, we are asking only for the principle of self-determination."

When I said that I thought the United States would decline the role of mediator, he nodded, and so I asked whether the United Nations or the International Court of Justice might be instrumental in healing the sore.

"The International Court would base its findings upon treaties made on our behalf before we were independent.[11] This is a political affair and can only be solved by political measures. We seek only for some assurance that the Emperor will consider the matter. We would be foolish to think of action in military terms--our 8,000 men against 70,000 better-armed Ethiopians[12]--but we must solve it! No politician in Somalia can suspend his consideration of the problem."

If I had had any doubts that the Ogaden was the main concern of the President of the state, they were dispelled by his seriousness. He continued:

"I told the Emperor in 1957 when we visited Addis Ababa that we wanted a peaceful solution, and we told him the same last summer when he visited here. Could not the United States intervene with him for a private meeting between the Emperor and myself?"

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[10] For some graphic reporting on the Ogaden and Somalia in general, see A Tear for Somalia, by Douglas Collins (London, 1960). The author was a police officer on the Somalia-Ethiopian border during the 1940's.

[11] It is the view of the British Privy Council that protectorate treaties do not have the force of international law. If this opinion is generally held, International Court arbitration might have value in the situation.

Mogadiscio's shorefront.

I could not answer the question, but I had doubts that a fruitful conversation could be held on this issue, so vital to the continuation of the Emperor's power in that any relinquishment of control of the Ogaden would likely be a signal to Ethiopia's other minorities to break away also. Our talked switched to the United States then.

The United States had already given aid, but not enough and not, the President said, "quickly enough." For this reason Somalia had turned to the Soviet Union for credit assistance, he pointed out. "The United States was just too slow for us."

The argument had some substance, because the Prime Minister had sought to visit Washington before making his journey to Moscow last spring, but the new and busily occupied administration was not prepared to receive him. The surprised Soviets were ready with a welcoming package of low-cost credit and a program of face-making festivities in honor of the new country.

"I wonder," said the President, "just what the United States thinks of Ethiopia. I would hate to believe that it accepts the image of 'the Christian island' in a sea of Islam. This would enter an ugly element into our relationship, and in the whole region."

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[12] The Somali commandant of police, probably the country's best military mind, believes that the Ethiopian high command, being largely of the mountain Amhara people, greatly dislikes operating in the lowlands of the country, and would be reluctant to undertake any major military operations in the Ogaden. However, it is conceivable that further deterioration of the position of the Emperor in Ethiopia might suggest a military campaign against Somalia for punishment of border incidents to create a political diversion in Addis Ababa. While no evidence was available to indicate active military planning against Somalia in Addis Ababa at this time, one well-informed adviser opined that "all armies think in terms of preventive war!" Ethiopia's superiority of strength over Somalia will never be greater than it is at present, and this could supply a tempting situation for ambitious generals or politicians eager to establish a national position before the demise of the aging Emperor.

"I doubt if our view of Ethiopia is much more than a sentimental remembrance of the brave Lion of Judah fighting against the Italians in 1936. The problem, I think, is that we know so little about Somalia," I replied.

"However, you do not give us military aid, yet the Ethiopians continue to get it because of the Eritrean base. The Americans obviously do not want to give us military aid also, but only economic.

"What conclusions can we make?" he asked.

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The Prime Minister apparently shared the doubts of the President about America's helpful participation in the affairs of the Horn of Africa. His anniversary speech to the national assembly congratulated Somalia on its first year of independence, and particularly praised the institutions of government that had made the national constitutional referendum a success--a "direct command from the people." He dwelt long upon the problems of further unification of the Somali people, and cited the petitions of Somalis living in Djibouti and Kenya for union with the republic. He reported upon his attendance at the Monrovia Conference of the Heads of African and Malagasy States, where he had (to somewhat lukewarm response) sought the support of Africa for Somalia's case against Ethiopia.[13] With detailed care, he described his successful visit to Moscow and listed the loans Somalia had received from the Eastern bloc. While expressing the nation's friendship for everybody he did not, and it was noted, utter any grateful words for United States aid.

Abdurashid Ali Shermarke was a clerk in a frontier British army post in the Ogaden a dozen years ago, but he was also an early member of the Somalia Youth League and a forceful personality. When his predecessor as prime minister of the provisional government, Abdullahi Issa, had stepped down following the departure of the Italian administration, Abdurashid Ali had taken over the executive control of government. He is a stocky, vibrant man, very much the political animal, I thought, who plunges directly into an interview with what seems at first to be a prepared speech.

In our talk, he was extremely frank. "Our problem is to unite this country and this makes the border problem critical. Our whole people are behind us in this, and the masses are getting an unfriendly idea of the United States because you won't help us, yet you help Ethiopia. I haven't asked the Soviets for arms because we would want them from the West, but I know that they would give them to us."

"What do you want the United States to do? Should America stop giving

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[13] For a report of the Monrovia conference see An African Cornerstone? (RF-5-'61), an AUFS publication by Reuben Frodin.

arms to Ethiopia, and give them to nobody, or should they be given to both Ethiopia and Somalia?"

He thought a moment.

"To both of us, to be fair," he said, and smiled. "But if the United States would intervene and help get talks going, we would be grateful."

When I asked if he would be interested in United Nations intervention, it was pointed out that the UN had already requested discussions between the two parties, followed by mediation, and then arbitration.

"We have been unable to do any of these," he said, "because Ethiopia is unwilling. If a border commission from the United Nations came and could only operate on our side, it would be of little use."

"Would there be any value to you in a tripartite declaration of protection and security by Britain, Italy, and the United States?" I asked. (Actually, the United States has already given an oral assurance of this in response to the charge that the arms granted Ethiopia might be used against Somalia.)

"Somalia would welcome such a declaration in principle," he responded, "but since such an undertaking would imply that the provisional borders between Ethiopia and Somalia were fixed, we could not accept that."

The range of negotiation was clearly narrowed.

"This is a political issue," continued the Prime Minister. "We want, we must want, the land and the people. Somalis in Ethiopia are a subject people, and black colonialism is no better than white. They do not have equal rights with the Amharas[14]; more than 200 of them have been shot in the past two weeks. This is not a Congo situation, perhaps, but it is important."

I raised the question of responsibility for contributing to the possible downfall of the Emperor by continued pressure on him. "To unseat the Emperor would be to exchange a known antagonist for an unknown."

He nodded in agreement. "We Somalis will always chose the certain for the uncertain," he said.

"It seems to me, Excellency, that there is an impasse. The Emperor won't and perhaps cannot yield. You are committed to a single demand, a plebiscite in the area, pointing to one result--annexation. There is just no deal to be made!"

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[14] A half-dozen other peoples contained within the empire could claim the same second-class citizenship, but the Somalis represent the most vociferous group whose land mass is adjacent to a now independent state.

"We are patient, however," he said. "We have been gaining moral support from the African states . . . . "

There is considerable doubt whether this assertion can be substantiated. The Monrovia conference urged only that the Emperor and the Somalis discuss the matter; the Cairo conference avoided the subject. Actually, almost all African states whose borders have been created by remote European agreement and without ethnic logic, have border problems related to resident minorities, similar to those of Ethiopia, which is in truth an "empire of subject peoples." Few African states in these early days of domestic political insecurity would desire to advocate the dismemberment of another as a solution of the problem. It may be preferable to develop nationalism within present borders, and to this extent the Somali objectives may be anachronistic.

There seemed, in this interchange with the Prime Minister, only one avenue left to explore--based on the old adage: "join them if you can't beat them."

"What would Somalia's reaction be to the economic integration of the Horn of Africa?" I inquired. "There seem to be many problems of mutual concern."

"I have already planned to consider projects such as the East African Federation," he replied, "but not before we have resolved the problem of Greater Somalia."

The possibility of economic co-operation and joint development planning between these two countries seems superficially to be great. An attack could be made on the problem of communications, involving roads and ports for a large inland territory of Ethiopia; there is opportunity for co-operative use of the waters of the two rivers that serve Somalia but rise in Ethiopia (and for which projects are now being planned by a Yugoslav team of engineers in Addis Ababa); there might be explored a common postal and customs system such as the British East African territories have long operated. The approach was intriguing.

"What I had in mind, Excellency, was to combine the two subjects. You are at an impasse with Ethiopia because of an apparent unwillingness on the part of the Emperor to discuss the matter at all in its political light. Perhaps, approached in such narrow terms, he has no alternative. My suggestion would be to open negotiations with Ethiopia looking toward economic integration, one of the objects of which would be the resolution of the Ogaden issue. Thus, hopefully, the issue would be placed in a constructive frame."

"If the Ogaden were made available to us, we would gladly join in integration of the Horn," he replied.

"Would you be willing to attempt a negotiation along these lines?" I per-

sisted, and we discussed some of the areas of discussion that might be suitable to consideration of integration.

Finally, he said: "Yes, if I thought it could work, and that the Ethiopians were interested, I would be prepared to undertake it."

The interview was over, but a sense of the continuing dilemma of policymakers came home to me as I left the white, porticoed Government House. Even for an America--less intimately connected with Africa than have been the countries of Europe--it might be difficult to accept the risks involved, but Africa must be left now to resolve its own local problems. The United States

Somalis on the Juba River.

is not suddenly thrust into the lofty position of a neo-imperator on the departure of the European colonialists certainly, yet if peace is to be America's first and most urgent concern, and essential to the rectification of the gap between haves and have-nots, can the United States ignore the risks implied in a policy of detachment?

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The birthday party in Somalia undoubtedly intensified both propaganda and honest feeling.

"Why," asked my Somali roomboy in the hotel, "don't the Negroes of America have their own flag as we do?"

But on another plane, I sat with three Somali members of the elite long into the night. With one I had debated the theories of John Locke; with another

I had listened to his plea that America cease emphasizing the black-white problem in its own defense and treat Africa as part of the world. "We are human beings first," he said, "Berlin is as much our problem as America's, we should not be restricted to discussions of Negroes in Alabama."

Somalis have been called the Irish of Africa, and the characterization is more fitting than not. Neither Negro nor Arab, with a country poor in resources, they are rich in wit and oral tradition. W. B. Yeats once wrote of the other Irish that "We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry." The comment seems applicable also on the Horn of Africa.

The thunder of the rhetoric and the cadence of the poetry were aspects of the incomplete nature of Somalia, as primordial as tribalism and as modern as electronics. It appears that Europe in its alacrity to unload the deficit of Somalia, and the United Nations in the haste to honor another national aspiration, had left the task unfinished. The problems attendant to Somalia's statehood still remained to be solved and it seemed certain that before long they would clamor for solution.

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